

LIFE OF CHARLES

THE SUBSTANCE OF A

S E R M O N

Preached after the FUNERAL of Mrs. WEST,

Wife of DANIEL WEST, Esq; of *Hornsey*; who departed this Life on
Wednesday the 16th of October, 1783.

By HENRY PECKWELL, D.D.

RECTOR of BLOXHAM.

Domine! Tū es VITA mea, quā vivo; spes, cui laboro; gloria,
quā adipisci desidero. AUGUSTIN.

Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum Tabernas,
Regumque Turres. ————— HOR.

L O N D O N

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T O

A worthy, faithful, surviving Husband,

To dutiful, affectionate, obedient Children,

As a Testimony of Friendship to them,

And a Token of Regard for the Deceased,

This S E R M O N is inscribed,

With great Sincerity,

By their most obedient,

And faithful humble Servant,

*Charlotte-street,
Portland-Place,
30th October, 1783.*

The A U T H O R.



A

S E R M O N.

COLOSSIANS, iii. 3.

YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST.

LARGE assemblies of mankind, to the thinking and the serious, have generally been attended with some important reflexions. Considerations of mortality or futurity have broken in upon their minds. That such a *herd* of human nature could not long exist in this, or, what would become of it in another world, has awakened the tenderest feelings, and, sometimes, made even the proud shake to the very center of his soul. When Xerxes led one of the greatest armies that ever covered the face of the earth, ascending a hill, he turned, looked

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upon

upon it, and wept. His aid-de-camps requested to know why his Majesty should weep? His reply was to this effect: "I was considering that, within an hundred years, all my brave fellows will lie silent in the grave." Can any man hear of a fellow-mortal's weeping over "dust returning to the dust from which it came," without recollecting the tears which the *Son of God* shed for the sake of perishing souls?

A circumstance, that makes large assemblies of mankind more solemn and more awful, is, that they are the only tolerable representation of the great, august, and last assembling together at the Bar of God. And this is the more striking, when persons are met together (as we are) to worship that very God, at whose Bar we must stand. To plead for mercy with him, to whom we must give an account; and, under the express declaration of his own truth, that he is now as much present in his Courts,

as he will then be at his Bar: invisibly, here, to extend mercy; visibly, there, to dispense justice: actually, in both, *searching the heart*, and rendering to every man according to his deeds.

It should never be forgotten with respect to the general Judgment, that all distinctions among men will then be at an end. Every man will have a cause to be tried, How will he be straightened 'till it be decided! There will be no idle spectator. No creature will be exempted. The prince and the peasant, the sovereign and the soldier, the landlord and the labourer, will all meet there: neither greatness nor meanness will excuse. The cottager will not be overlooked, by that sharp-sighted eye, from whose piercing view the lordly owner of a mansion cannot be hidden.

To these general and obvious considerations, the present mournful occasion adds another, which has no small weight in

depressing the mind, and frequently stamps, at least for a season, solemnity upon the soul, which has been too much given to vanity, and renders even the thoughtless, thoughtful.

The fable hue which covers the place wherein I stand, the attending relations and dependents tell you what I mean; that the Christian person, lately a wife to one, a parent to some, a friend to not a few, an acquaintance of many, is no more. In the language of Scripture, those who love the Lord Jesus have lost a *sister in Christ*. Lost, did I say! let that word be obliterated! *Let us not sorrow like men without hope, for those who die in the Lord.* She is retired to her Father's, she is gone before, she is *fallen asleep in Jesus*, she is—not lost, for, *when Christ shall come, He will bring her with him; we shall see him as he is, and be for ever with the Lord.*

The

The hand of Providence sometimes strikes hard; when it touches those who are tied by bonds of blood or friendship, it strikes home: but there are, sometimes, circumstances attending the strokes of Providence, which make them more severe; such attend me this moment. Just arrived from a neighbouring and sister kingdom, and from a long tour through different parts of this; happy in having been blessed with many and great scenes of usefulness, I find my first labours at home, engaged to perform the last offices to a departed friend, and, must acknowledge, that I ascended the pulpit with greater oppression of heart, than I usually do on my return to speak of *his goodness and mercy which endureth for ever.*

While we lament the loss of a friend, let us rejoice in the felicity of a Christian. On her account let every eye be dried. Methinks I hear her say, "*Weep not for me, but, weep for yourselves.*" Will you mourn,

mourn, when a mariner, who has been long tossed in a tempestuous ocean, gets safe on shore? Will you weep, because *the good fight of faith is fought*, the battle won, and victory gained for ever? Will you lament her departure, who *has passed through her lot of tribulation, has washed her robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?* Let sorrow cease. Let no other use be made of my memory, my sufferings or support, my life or death; but to improve them to his glory on whose merit I trusted, in whose strength I was upheld, and to the present comfort and future welfare of his people."

In obedience to sentiments, so evangelic and so just, I shall endeavour to explain and illustrate the words that fell from her dying lips. Leaning upon her arm, her husband and children surrounding her bed of agonizing pain (pain that for eleven long nights and days forbade one single hour's rest) with a faltering tongue, she said,

" O

"O that I had my voice, that I might
 "speak my Redeemer's praise!" and, soon
 after, with an emphasis, which none but
 a dying person could give, cried out, "My
 "soul is hid in Jesus."——She reclined
 her head, gently sighed, and fell asleep in
 Him. Happy soul! God grant us *like*
precious faith and victory, in our last mo-
 ments!

What is life? He alone can answer this
 question, who *breathed into the nostrils of*
man the breath of life, when man became a
living soul. Of life we rather know the
 effects, than in what it consists. The
 term itself is almost as ambiguous, as the
 nature of the thing is difficult. For, God
 and man, the soul and body, an animal and
 plant, are all said to live, whereas there is
 nothing common to them all, but an active,
 operative existence.

Notwithstanding life, abstractedly con-
 sidered, is involved in darkness; the life,
 4 mentioned

mentioned in my text, is attended with less obscurity, being *brought to light by the Gospel*; by which we are taught that it consists,

First, in a legal title to God's favour, in opposition to that condemnation and wrath, which resteth upon the children of disobedience. For, in the record that God hath given us, we are told, *that life is in his Son; that he that hath the Son hath life, and that he that hath not the Son, hath not life.* The information of the holy Scriptures upon the mode of possessing this life, in Christ Jesus, is clear and decisive: *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life.* And again, Christ himself sayeth, *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into CONDEMNATION, but is passed from death unto life.*

To this declaration of God, may be added the example of man. We hear one, who assures us, *that the life which he lived in the flesh, he lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him.* He had sought life by the law, and found; that there was no law given, which could give it. In this situation he pathetically laments his misery——*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* From the gracious lips of our redeeming Lord, he heard a voice which dissipated his fear, and bound up his broken heart. *I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.*

Secondly, The life here spoken of includes that spiritual union which subsists between Christ and his Church. By faith in his blood, we receive remission of sin; by this union with his Spirit, we obtain strength to subdue it. He is the head of

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influence

influence and the source of power. As the vital system is destroyed, when the heart ceases to beat, or, the edge of sensibility blunted, when the brain is materially injured, so, when Christ withholds his grace and presence, do his members droop and die. In his own words, *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

To live, receiving out of the Saviour's fulness; obtaining and enjoying the blessings of the eternal Covenant; through him, growing in grace, and in similitude to himself, is called a *life of communion with God in Christ Jesus*; it is the happy effect of that former union which he has been graciously pleased to appoint, and which he will defend with the united powers of his Godhead.

Hence arises the inamissibility of this life, and the immutability of this union.

So

So that it is said, by the Lord himself, when in prayer for *all who should believe on him through his Gospel; As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; may they also be one in us. The glory, which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.* Let the enemies of God's people direct their artillery against the rock of ages. Let them scale heaven, and storm the gates of the beatific city. Let them cut the bonds of union, whereby the Father and the Son are one; and then, but not 'till then, these people will tremble under their victorious arms, and look upon their own situation as a forlorn hope.

This life has been distinguished according to its different periods and effects. When a trembling soul flees to the promises of truth for refuge, and rests his *eternal all* upon the power, fidelity, and merit of the great and good promiser, it is called a *life of faith*. When he obtains strength to *bring every high thought into sub-*

jection to that truth, and to break the sceptre of every ruling evil; when its dictates are imprinted upon his heart, and its precepts copied into his conduct, it becomes a *life of sanctification*. But as soon as hope shall issue in fruition, faith be absorbed in vision, and sin and sorrow done away; when the weary traveller, like our deceased friend, shall be arrived at home; and the worn-out veteran shall have received the palm, it most justly and strictly assumes the name of *eternal life*, not only on account of its duration, but its nature; for, then, we shall no longer *see through a glass darkly, but face to face; and know, not in part, but even as also we are known*. Our view being clear, our love to God will be perfect, our happiness compleat. He who is *the Resurrection* as well as *the Life*, will cause that which was sown * in corruption, dishonour,

* Its being sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, refers, not so much to its exit, as its entrance into life. In due time, like a *bare grain of wheat*, or other corn,

dishonour and weakness; to be raised in incorruption, glory, and power: That which was sown a natural body, to be raised a spiritual body, to bear a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us. What on earth we possessed as a Life of Grace, in heaven we shall inherit as a Life of Glory.

Valuable as *this life* must appear, whether it be considered as including the blessings of grace or glory; it is rendered inestimable

corn, it dies and rots, in order, like it, to be raised to a more beautiful and lasting plant, without dissolution in its nature, or death as its attendant; for they, who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the Resurrection from the dead, cannot die any more, but are equal to the Angels, i. e. in an indefectible and indissoluble nature. The *Σωμα ψυχικόν*, natural, or, rather, animal body, which on earth had been supported by material food, changed by Him, who giveth to every seed a body, as he pleaseth, will obtain from the second Adam a spirituality of life essential and inseparable, neither wanting foreign support, nor subject to internal decay.

by the security that God has afforded, in assuring us that it is *hidden in Christ, laid up*, as our blessed Saviour has exhorted us *to lay up our treasure, in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through, nor steal. Shut up*, as the contents of a letter under a seal, or, as a jewel of great price within a strong casket. *Hidden*, like the new name written in the white stone, which is given to him that *overcometh*, and which no man knoweth, *saving he that receiveth it*. Hence its secrecy and security are evident.

Its secrecy from those, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds, left the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; who, from ignorance, esteem it folly; and too often in the pursuit of vanity, trample it under their feet. Unknowing, and unknown of God, they will not come to Christ that they may have life. Walking in darkness, they walk in danger, but being unconvinced,

convinced, they esteem the convictions of others unsubstantial, and unnecessary. They contemn their joys, despise their sorrows, and reject their hopes; until they have passed the *valley of the shadow of death*, and see “ the righteous man stand in great
 “ boldness before the face of such as have
 “ afflicted him, and made no account of
 “ his labours. Then shall they be amazed
 “ at the strangeness of his salvation, so far
 “ beyond all that they looked for. Repenting and groaning with anguish of
 “ spirit, they shall say within themselves,
 “ This was he, whom we had sometimes
 “ in derision, and a proverb of reproach.
 “ We fools accounted HIS LIFE madness,
 “ and his end to be without honour. How
 “ is he numbered among the children of
 “ God, and his lot among the saints?”

As the nature, principle, and happy effects of this life, are altogether hidden from the eye of vanity, and sin; so, in great measure, are they sometimes obscure to
 those

those who diligently seek it, and have a title to it by the covenant and promises of God. The efforts of a heart, by nature, totally corrupt; by grace, but in part, renewed; produce clouds, which intercept the enlightening beams of the *Sun of Righteousness*, and make it difficult, for a tried mind, to decide upon a matter of such infinite importance. The discouragements which arise from the world wherein they dwell, and from that enemy who tempts only to deceive and to destroy, too frequently prevail so far, as to make the best question their title and doubt of their inheritance. Thus, fluctuating between hopes and fears, they drag on many miserable hours, which ought to have been spent in gratitude and praise. For,

Not only its *secrecy*, but *security* appears from its being lodged in such good hands, and lain up with so powerful a friend. No device or weapon formed against him can prosper. The arrow, levelled

velled at our life, like that which poor old Priam's unstrung arm threw at the murdering Pyrrhus, may faintly ring against our *shield of faith*, but will fall harmless to the ground.

Attempts, unsuccessfully repeated, equally shew the malice and perseverance of the enemy; the powerful interposition, and invincible defence of our friend. How can *they* finally die, of whom, Christ says, *because I live, ye shall live also*? How can *they* be destitute of a Comforter, for whom he prayed the Father to *give one that might abide with them for ever*? Having laid down his life for us, he has legally secured ours in him. Having spiritual life in himself as an head and fountain of influence, he momentarily supplies our wants, and the *water of life* circulates through all the members to preserve them in health and from decay. In defence of the life, which is hidden in Christ, the attributes of God, his justice, equity, mercy, power, truth,

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and

and faithfulness are engaged; and He, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. To this security our blessed Saviour alludes, when he says of the sheep that were given to him, *My Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

Now, let us consider what are the advantages which arise from being partakers of this life, and from its being secured and hidden in Christ; with a particular reference to the experience of our departed friend, in the hours of her sickness and moment of her death.

In health, while youth and prosperity attend our way, too many of us are apt to be negligent and forgetful. The paths of vice, and ways of death, appear too pleasant to be avoided, though destructive if pursued. Poor lost man, that self-destroyer! if ever snatched from the ruin that lies before

fore him, must be saved, as a judicious author expresses it, “ in spite of his own unhappy disposition to vice and misery.” Under a sense of his unworthiness, no other consideration, than that life is laid up, secured, and freely given in Christ Jesus, can ever raise his guilty head, afford him any hope, or give him any victory. “ At the foot of the Cross he must lay all his virtues and his vices, his merits and demerits, and tear from his heart all that pride which would obstruct his salvation and ensure his destruction.”

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Alpha and Omega of our hope, produces that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto life; a change, necessary to our future happiness, and, equally necessary, if we believe the most serious in their departing moments, to be wrought while health, and strength, and ease preclude that anxiety and inquietude which attend a bed of pain. O earth!

hear the declarations of thy fellow-worm on the borders of the grave. To a friend she cried out, "How dreadful must it be to defer repentance to a death-bed! I can neither pray nor think; but I know my Jesus is praying for me." O dust! look to the dust to which she is returned, and thou art returning. Thy days at most must be few. *Thy life a hand's-breadth. Consider thy latter-end.* Call upon thy God; seek, with thine whole heart, that *life which is hid in Christ*. Receiving it from the hand of his grace, thou wilt be protected by the arm of his power. In death thou mayest commit thy soul to his care, and in eternity admire the riches of his love.

When health declines, the sun of prosperity sets, and "sleep, like the world, forsakes the wretched." The advantages of this *life in Christ Jesus* are too conspicuous not to be seen, too valuable not to be wished for. His gracious sympathetic care in all our trials, his being, in all our afflictions, afflicted,

afflicted, lightens, while it shares, our burthens, and sanctifies, while it supports, our hearts. An interest in his superlative sufferings and patience, makes us ashamed of our own impatience, and forgetful of our own miseries.

The kind assurance which he has given *that where he is, we shall be also*, our departed friend declared had been a support to her mind, and the food of her soul. Look forward, ye, that are walking in the same steps, where He is, *the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest*; sin and sorrow are done away; peace and joy abound; there, poor afflicted soul! there shalt thou be, to live and reign with him for evermore,

If declining health place these blessings in a desirable point of view, declining years and the borders of the grave will endear them more. There men often see things as they are. Happy it is, when the mask drops before the man.

The verge of eternity is well suited for a salutary retrospect of this world, and a just prospect of the next. Here men feel the value of religion, and, conscious of its worth, wish, with her whose remains we have lately deposited, to "commend their children, and all they love, to the blood of Jesus," that, washed from their sins, they may appear unblemished at the throne of God.

In this situation she was triumphant, but not insensible. The painful messenger that called her hence, embittered her path, tho' eventually it encreased her felicity, and ushered her to glory. Her grace, evident to others, was in great measure obscure to herself. Her cry was for more patience, while all around her admired her resignation, and wondered at the goodness of God in her support.

The conflict of nature, blessed be God, was unattended with conflict of soul. A steady,

steady, uninterrupted confidence, was her companion under her affliction, and constrained her to acknowledge how much she was indebted to God, who “ had not suffered her in this illness to be worried “ with doubts and fears*.” Thus suffering, believing, praying and glorifying God, she spent eleven days, when it pleased the Great Disposer of all events, that exhausted nature should sink, and the lamp of life be extinguished here; like other lamps, the short, yet strong efforts of its expiring flame, struck the beholders, and enlightened all

* So she expressed herself, to a worthy Minister who attended her in her illness. The force and propriety of the expression will be best understood by those, who have felt a variety of doubts, in spite of a rightly-informed mind, and been subject to bondage through fears of death, notwithstanding they have seen clearly that its sting has been taken away by Christ Jesus. There is an hour at hand, however, when these inconsistencies and conflicts will have an end; when our judgments and passions will be in unison; when unreasonable fears and groundless sorrows will cease, and the Christian will have no longer to contend with a *body of sin*, or an *evil heart of unbelief*.

around

around her. Her mind was unimpaired, her confidence encreased, her comfort solid; and she left life with fewer fears, and greater hopes, than ever she experienced in it.

It is proverbially said, on the departure of our friends, that our loss is their gain; but, let us not sit down contented with the loss, without seeking grace from God to be sharers in the gain. We cannot reap with them, on such occasions, perfection of joy and bliss; but, we may obtain manifold advantages in a deeper knowledge of ourselves, the vanity of life, the certainty of death, the supports of grace, and the goodness of God. Families and friendship suffer, under amputations, as well as individuals; and the loss of *a right hand or a right eye* is, oftentimes, as severely felt. Shall we, my brethren! be deprived of their society and their assistance, of the consolation they afforded us under our trials, and the seasonable advice they have given

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ven us in an hour of prosperity, without laying it to heart. God forbid! Let us follow them in thought. They cannot come to us; we shall go to them. May the Lord prepare us for the awful hour, and help us “so to pass things temporal, “that we finally lose not the things which “are eternal.”

When *the righteous and merciful are taken away from the evil to come*, why are creatures, so poor, so vile, and worthless as we are, left behind? Probably, because we are behind in those attainments, those tempers and frames of mind, which, tho’ given and wrought of God, are necessary to the enjoyment of his presence, and the things that are ultimately *prepared for them that love him*; or worse, behind in a dark, legal, sinful state, and unfit to die. The corn is not ripe, the harvest, therefore, is deferred, and the sickle not put in. *Awake to righteousness, ye that forget God*. Let this dying Saint’s soliloquy, in the moment

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of

of agitation and of death, sink deep into thy soul. “ It is well (says she) that I have not “ put off my repentance to a death-bed.” The Lord bless you, and help you to repent before it be too late——too late, I say ! because *in death there is no remembrance of God; in the grave none can give him thanks.* No device, no repentance there. As the tree falls, it lies. In the state which death leaves thee, thou wilt be found at the bar of God. The excuse which the Lacedemonians made for the slow steps of their tribunals, and the length of time afforded to their criminals, shall be mine, for urging your repentance while your days are lengthened, and your hours run on.——“ A mistake in “ this case is incorrigible.”

Could I be admonished by her who once sat beneath this pulpit, but now stands above, adoring and admiring the riches of his grace and the depths of his mercy, whose word she heard from it; I should be taught to comfort the weak-hearted, and to encourage

courage them, who, though *weak*, are, *yet, pursuing*. For, notwithstanding, when doubts are the most distressing, and fears the most fatal, her's were removed, the solid assurance which accompanied and comforted the latter days of her life, could never obliterate the many anxious moments that had attended a timid walk for four-and-twenty years.

Her serious attention, which terminated in a happy conversion to God, was, at first, excited by a discourse upon the *Balm in Gilead*, and *the physician there*; her daily experience, according to her own account, was, *to have a little strength, and not deny his name*; her triumphant departure, to see clearly her interest in *that covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure*, and to exult with unbounded confidence, that her soul was hid in Jesus*.

Such

* “ Short of heaven itself, there is not any thing
 “ which affords a nobler sight, than that of a *Believer*
 “ standing on the Verge of Eternity, filled with the faith

Such has been the lot of many of God's weakest children. They, who have began their journey, with feebly crying, *Lord! I believe, help thou mine unbelief*, have finished their course with the triumphant language of the Apostle, *O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth it to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Jacob, though a worm, threshes the mountains. Let the lambs of the flock remember, that *Jesus gathers them in his arms, and carries them in his bosom.* The strongest oak was once an acorn; the most flourishing plant a seed. Grace, like the waters through which Ezekiel was (visionally) conducted, at first may reach *but to the ankle*, but the further we go the deeper they are, until

“ which casts out fear, happy in the assured possession
 “ of grace, and longing for the completion of that grace
 “ in glory.”

*Teplady. Gleanings of the Vintage,
 Meditat. on Gen. xlix.---10.*

they

they become *a river which cannot be passed over :*

“ A sea of love and life unknown,

“ Without a bottom or a shore.”

Lastly, let those whose *life is hid with Christ in God*, remember, that *he who is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit*. May the *mind which was in Christ Jesus be in you*, regulating your thoughts and directing your conduct. Great is your security, great your privileges ; let your praise keep pace with them. Tremble not at future trials or sufferings. He who died to redeem and sent his grace to turn you to God, will *never leave you, or forsake you*.

Look back with astonishment at the danger you have escaped, look forward, with earnest expectation, to the blessings that are promised ; forget not his wisdom, power and faithfulness, in whose hands God has trusted his Glory, his Grace, and his People ; in whom, also, is laid up, your Peace, your Life, your Felicity. Every step you take,

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follow,

follow, as much as in you lies, his example, *who did no sin and in whose mouth there was no guile.* To HIM, with the FATHER, and the HOLY SPIRIT, be equal and immortal praise. *Amen.*

T H E E N D



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A small, dark, rectangular object, possibly a piece of wood or metal, is shown in the center of the page. It has a rough, textured surface and appears to be a fragment of a larger object. The object is oriented vertically and is surrounded by a dark, irregular border. The background is a light, mottled gray.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the various departments of the Government of the State of New York, for the year 1900.